

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

news release

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WILDLIFE REFUGE RENAMED TO HONOR LEE METCALF

Secretary of the Interior Cecil D. Andrus announced today that a national wildlife refuge near the hometown of the late Senator Lee Metcalf has been renamed in his honor for his contributions to the National Wildlife Refuge System.

Lee Metcalf National Wildlife Refuge, formerly known as Ravalli National Wildlife Refuge, occupies about 2,700 acres in Bitterroot Valley in Ravalli County, Montana. The refuge is about 2 miles from Stevensville, Senator Metcalf's hometown in the western part of the State, and was visited by him on several occasions.

"Lee Metcalf was a strong supporter of the National Wildlife Refuge System," Secretary Andrus said, "and through his efforts established himself as a true benefactor to the Nation's wildlife and to all who enjoy these irreplaceable treasures."

The refuge is a typical Montana river valley, encircled by mountains and bisected by the Bitterroot River. It is a haven for numerous species of birds, both migratory and resident, including ducks, geese, whistling swans, great blue herons, egrets, sandhill cranes, shorebirds, gulls, terns, and golden and bald eagles.

Senator Metcalf served with devotion on the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission from 1961 to 1975, and established the unparalleled record of having attended without exception each of the 50 meetings held during his Commission membership. The Commission is a federally appointed body which approves migratory bird refuge areas to be purchased with funds derived from the sale of Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamps. Senator Metcalf's membership was concurrent with a major, accelerated land acquisition program to preserve fast disappearing waterfowl habitat.

The Senator was also a strong supporter of appropriations for refuge acquisitions. He sponsored legislation amending the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act which broadened funding for refuge acquisition and which will result in substantial additions to the Refuge System.

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